

What Is Claimed Is:

1. A method for initializing operation of an information security operation for an entity, comprising the steps of:
 - 5 storing at least one of: entity identification data and a function of entity identification data and storing associated shared authentication data; storing inquiry data to facilitate entry of shared authentication data for initialization;
 - 10 retrieving the stored inquiry data for presentation based on received entity identification data;
 - receiving shared authentication data in response to the presented inquiry data;
 - 15 comparing received shared authentication data with the stored shared authentication data; and
 - determining whether to initialize operation of the information security operation based on the comparison.
2. The method of claim 1 wherein the step of storing inquiry data includes storing at least one of: a plurality of forms containing questions wherein different forms are stored for different types of shared authentication data and are selectable through a user interface, and a plurality of questions indexed based on at least type of shared authentication data that are automatically selected for presentation based on received entity identification data.
- 25 3. The method of claim 1 including the steps of:
 - storing data representing a function of the entity identification data and storing shared authentication type data;
 - subsequently generating data representing a function of the received entity identification data;

obtaining the stored shared authentication type data based on the subsequently generated data representing a function of the received entity identification data; and

selecting, under control of a processing unit, stored inquiry data for presentation to a user, based on the obtained stored shared authentication type data.

4. The method of claim 1 wherein the step of initializing the operation of the information security operation includes the use of a PAKE or other appropriate protocol.

5. The method of claim 1 wherein the step of determining whether to initialize the operation of the information security operation includes repeating the steps of:

retrieving stored inquiry data for presentation based on received entity identification data;

receiving shared authentication data in response to the presented inquiry data and combining with previously received authentication data;

comparing received shared authentication data with the stored shared authentication data; and

determining whether to initialize operation of the information security operation based on the comparison.

6. A method for initializing operation of an information security operation for an entity, comprising the steps of:

storing, by a first processor, at least one of: entity identification data and a function of entity identification data and storing associated shared authentication data;

storing, by a second processor, inquiry data to facilitate entry of shared authentication data for initialization;

retrieving, by the second processor, the stored inquiry data for presentation based on received entity identification data;

receiving, by a third processor, shared authentication data in response to the presented inquiry data;

comparing received shared authentication data with the stored shared authentication data; and

determining whether to initialize operation of the information security operation based on the comparison.

7. The method of claim 6 wherein the step of storing inquiry data includes storing at least one of: a plurality of forms containing questions wherein different forms are stored for different types of shared authentication data and are selectable through a user interface, and a plurality of questions indexed based on at least type of shared authentication data that are automatically selected for presentation based on received entity identification data.

8. The method of claim 7 including the steps of:

storing data representing a function of the entity identification data and storing shared authentication type data;

subsequently generating data representing a function of the received entity identification data;

obtaining the stored shared authentication type data based on the subsequently generated data representing a function of the received entity identification data; and

selecting, under control of the second processing unit, at least one of the plurality of questions indexed based on type of shared authentication data for presentation, based on the obtained stored shared authentication type data.

9. The method of claim 6 wherein the step of initializing the operation of the information security operation includes the use of a PAKE or other appropriate protocol.

10. The method of claim 6 wherein the step of determining whether to initialize the operation of the information security operation includes repeating the steps of:

- retrieving stored inquiry data for presentation based on received entity identification data;
- receiving shared authentication data in response to the presented inquiry data and combining with previously received authentication data;
- comparing received shared authentication data with the stored shared authentication data; and
- determining whether to initialize operation of the information security operation based on the comparison.

11. A system for initializing operation of an information security operation for an entity, comprising:

a first processor, storing at least one of entity identification data and a function of entity identification data and storing associated shared authentication data;

a second processor operatively coupled to the first processor, storing inquiry data to facilitate entry of shared authentication data for initialization and retrieving the stored inquiry data for presentation based on received entity identification data;

the entity operative to receive shared authentication data in response to the presented inquiry data; and wherein

the second processor compares received shared authentication data with the stored shared authentication data and determines whether to initialize operation of the information security operation based on the comparison.

12. The system of claim 11 wherein the first processor stores at least one of: a plurality of forms containing questions wherein different forms are stored for different types of shared authentication data and are selectable through a user interface, and a plurality of questions indexed based on at least type of shared authentication data that are automatically selected for presentation based on received entity identification data.

13. The system of claim 11 wherein:

the first processor stores data representing a function of the entity identification data and stores shared authentication type data; and

the second processor subsequently generates data representing a function of the received entity identification data and obtains the stored shared authentication type data based on the subsequently generated data

representing a function of the received entity identification data, and
selects at least one of the plurality of questions indexed based on type of
shared authentication data for presentation, based on the obtained stored
shared authentication type data.

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14. The system of claim 11 wherein the second processor includes a request generator
and a question generator and wherein the entity includes a graphic user interface
for presenting questions received from the second processor.

10 15. The system of claim 11 wherein the second processor initializes the information
security operation using a PAKE or other appropriate protocol.

15 16. The system of claim 11 wherein the second processor determines whether to
initialize the operation of the information security operation by repeating the steps
of:

retrieving stored inquiry data for presentation based on received
entity identification data;

receiving shared authentication data in response to the presented
inquiry data and combining with previously received authentication data;

20 comparing received shared authentication data with the stored
shared authentication data; and

determining whether to initialize operation of the information
security operation based on the comparison.

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